

# Health Promotion Program Evaluation

**United States Army Center for  
Health Promotion and Preventive  
Medicine**

**Directorate of Health Promotion  
and Wellness**

**“However beautiful the  
strategy...**

**You should occasionally look at  
the results.”**

**-Winston Churchill**

# Definition

**A program is an organized method of providing related services to a group of customers.**

# What is program evaluation?

**“Program evaluation is carefully collecting information about a program or some aspect of a program in order to make necessary decisions about the program.”**

***Carter McNamara  
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# Benefits of program evaluation

- **Determine program impact**
- **Quantify benefits for the Commander**
- **Compare resources used/results achieved**
- **Identify areas for improvement**
- **Identify unexpected outcomes**

# Misconception #1

**Program evaluation is useless.**

# Misconception #2

**Program evaluation is  
about program success or failure.**

# Misconception #3

**Program evaluation is very complicated and can only be done by experts.**



# Misconception #4

**Program evaluation  
takes too much time.**

**OR**

**There isn't enough time to do  
program evaluation.**

# Fact of life

**Program evaluation left to “**chance**”  
or  
until “**there is time**”  
will never happen.**

# Where do you start?

## Make a plan.

- **What you need to know?**
- **Why you need to know it?**
- **How you can measure what you need to know?**

# What is data and why do you need it?

**Data = a piece of information = outcomes**

**Use data to:**

- **Evaluate program effectiveness**
- **Answer the “so what” question**
- **Get command buy-in**
- **Write a budget justification**
- **Use program resources effectively**
- **Market your program**



# Four-step program evaluation process

**Step #1: Get baseline data**

**Step #2: Plan and implement the program**

**Step #3: Collect and evaluate outcomes**

**Step #4: Make improvements**

# Step #1: Get baseline data

- **Start backwards.**
- **Determine what data is essential.**
- **Collect only a few items.**

**Helpful hint: use data that is  
already being collected.**

# What kinds of data can be used?

BMI	Glasses of water	Lost duty or training time	Program costs	Movement to a different stage of change
Cholesterol	Servings of fruit/vegetables			
Blood pressure				
Smoker/non-smoker	# of cigarettes/day	Awareness of program materials (posters)	# of visits (ER, physician)	Attendance at health screenings or classes
Weight	How often: fast food		Healthcare visits avoided	
Levels of:	Dietary supplement use	Pre-/post-tests	# of steps	
Physical activity	# meals/day	# meals/day	CO <sub>2</sub> level	Sales in the dining facility
Stress	Health level	Inches (waist girth)	APFT score	
Energy				

Always tie the program to  
readiness





# Step #2: Plan and implement the program

## Questions to consider:

- What behaviors will/does the program affect?
- How will these behaviors change *because of program activities*?

# Use the evidence

- **What are the behavioral factors affecting the health need?**
- **What is the evidence that a behavior change will make a difference?**
- **Has the behavior been successfully changed by other health promotion programs?**
- **What other social, physical, or environmental factors influence the health need or the target population?**

# Keep the bottom line up front

- **Plan backwards.**
- **Identify outcomes.**
- **Determine what will be measured.**
- **Identify critical program elements**

# Step #3: Collect and evaluate outcomes

- What changed as a result of the program?
- Compare outcomes data to baseline data.

**Reality check:** many program evaluations falter because of lack of outcomes data.



# Follow-up is always a challenge.

- **Simple**
- **Structured**
- **Creative**
- **Flexible**

# Follow-up strategies

- **Have participants sign a contract.**
- **Ask participants to contact YOU at a specific time (i.e., the end of the month).**
- **Have a reunion day; provide support and a forum for successes - plus an opportunity to get follow-up data.**
- **Sell the idea of follow-up to participants (what's in it for them).**
- **Give something to participants when you ask for follow-up (like a recipe or a fitness tip).**
- **Divide participants into teams - tag the "team leader" to get the information back to you.**

# More follow-up strategies

- Put a box with a slot outside your office so participants can drop off follow-up information anytime.
- Have a contest: the team with the most information back gets a silly prize.
- Snag past program participants and get follow-up information when they enroll in another program.

Helpful hint: make the follow-up process as **easy** and **convenient** as possible.

# Step #4: Make improvements

- **What worked?**
- **What didn't work?**
- **What could go better?**



# More questions to ask

- **What was the specific impact?**
- **What unexpected outcomes occurred?**
- **What business practices changed or were improved?**
- **How was force readiness improved?**

# What if.....?

- **...your health promotion program is already up and running?**
- **...you don't have any baseline data?**
- **...you didn't plan ahead for a program evaluation?**

# Data collection & analysis resources

- **Local college and graduate students**
- **Interns**
- **Other MTF personnel**
- **Past program participants**

# Making data collection and analysis easier

- **Let participants know you will be collecting follow-up information**
- **Keep your data organized**
- **Define desired program outcomes**



# Program evaluation as a marketing tool

- **Think Madison Avenue**
- **Convince the audience to buy into health promotion**
- **Use program evaluation to quantify the value and benefits of health promotion**

# Critical success factor

**Program evaluation is essential  
for gaining Command support.**

# How to get Command support

- Know your Commander's priorities.
- Think like a Commander.
- Communicate the value of your activity ***for the Commander.***
- Describe exactly how this activity leads to increased force readiness.

# Other resources

- **Build a network**
- **Collaborate**
- **Find all the data sources**
- **Take advantage of resources that already exist.**



# Online resources

- **Health Promotion and Prevention Initiatives (HPPI) Program web page**  
<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Population/HPPI.aspx>
- **CDC Evaluation Working Group** <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/index.htm>
- **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/eval/index.htm>

# Summary

- **Get baseline data**
- **Plan and Implement the program**
- **Collect outcomes and evaluate**
- **Make improvements based on the evaluation**

All roads should lead to  
readiness

